

COUNTRY The Netherlands

SUBJECT Policy and Activities of the
Netherlands-USSR Society

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1. During a discussion in Amsterdam on 6 December 1948 between Paul de Groot, a member of the Executive Committee of the CPN, Sjef Pieters, President of the CPN, Amsterdam Headquarters, and Marten van der Zee, Secretary and a founder of the Netherlands-USSR Society, de Groot outlined his views on what should be the future policy of the Netherlands-USSR Society.
2. De Groot stated that the Society should strive to obtain a select, but limited number of members from the intellectuals and the middle-class, but in such endeavors it should have as little contact as possible with the CPN, a view shared by F. S. Gusev, Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in The Hague, who, however, warned de Groot against the danger of bourgeois elements gaining control of the Society.
3. In line with such a policy and to make the Society more acceptable to non-Communist intellectuals, at its next congress an effort will be made to reform the Central and Executive Committees to assure just a bare margin of Communist control. Under no circumstances, however, will a basic change in the Society's attitude toward the Soviet Union be permitted.
4. On 11 November 1948 three officers of the Society, Engineer S. J. Rutgers, Dr. J. M. E. M. Zonnenberg and Marten van der Zee, met with F. S. Gusev and M. S. Vetrov, Counsellor of the Soviet Embassy, to discuss various aspects of the Society's propaganda and cultural program.
5. Gusev promised the representatives of the Society that WOKS, a section of the Soviet Embassy responsible for financing pro-Soviet propaganda and Communist activities in the Netherlands, would provide Russian films for the exclusive use of the Society and Russian plays for presentation by Dutch theatrical companies without payment of authors' royalties. Gusev also assured Dr. Zonnenberg that WOKS would arrange to have a Russian ballet company come to the Netherlands at its expense if Zonnenberg could organize several performances in Amsterdam.
6. In answer to Dr. Zonnenberg's question about whether anything could be done to prevent showing the film "Behind the Iron Curtain" in the Netherlands, Vetrov remarked that, as the Russians were guests in the country, they could not involve themselves in a political question of this nature. As a result, the Executive Committee of the Society decided to protest against showing the film, although

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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It does not expect the authorities will act in its favor. [REDACTED] Comment:
The New York Times of 22 January 1949 reported that this film has been banned by
The Dutch Government Board of Film Censors. No reason for this action was given.)

7. In efforts to win members through cultural activities, sponsored in part by VOKS, the Society has found that VOKS is very slow to act and that material on the USSR is available only on a small scale.
8. The Society has seven sections active in varying degrees in the fields of music, medicine, education, plastic arts, economics, architecture and theatre. Current activities of the sections are reported to be as follows:
 - a. Music: In 1948 two musical evenings were given with a third planned for December at which Marius Flothius will make the introductory address.
 - b. Medicine: On 14 November 1948 Dr. van der Wolen introduced four films on Soviet medical care to various Amsterdam surgeons and doctors. The Society had sent 15 tickets to each doctor of the Wilhemina Hospital which tactic was so successful it will be used again. Similar films will also be shown in the universities.
 - c. Education: This section is relatively inactive with few members, but Dr. Vos of the Berlaeus Gymnasium has promised to give to teachers a series of lectures to be prepared by Mrs. I. Prins.
 - d. Plastic arts: It is thought by the Society that there would be greater interest in this activity, if more material were available. Despite this, J. Havermans has been asked to organize a lecture on the subject to be given in January 1949.
 - e. Economics: Because of the absence of information on economic trends in the USSR, this section has had a difficult time, as speakers are hard to obtain.
 - f. Architecture: R. Bodegraven and Bakema (fnu), an architect in Rotterdam, have been approached to help build up this section, but both have indicated that the work of Soviet architects for propaganda in The Netherlands is not suitable.
 - g. Theatre: Hermine Heijermans' intention to form a theatrical group in Amsterdam to give Russian plays will be supported by the Society which will also pass the plays on to Dr. Pos of the Drama School (Toneelschool) in Amsterdam.

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